

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-11

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AID-05 EB-08 AGRE-00 SS-15 NSC-05
OES-07 L-03 OMB-01 TRSE-00 CIAE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00
XMB-02 SP-02 /070 W
-----077772 221400Z /64

P R 221230Z MAY 78
FM AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7318
INFO AMCONSUL LAHORE
AMCONSUL KARCHI

C O N F I D E N T I A L ISLAMABAD 5070

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: EAGR, EFIN, SPOP, PK
SUBJECT: MEETING WITH GHULAN ISHAQ; WHEAT PRODUCTION,
FAMILY PLANNING AND DEBT RESCHEDULING

1. DURING MAY 22 REVIEW OF SEVERAL SUBJECTS WITH SECRETARY
GENERAL-IN-CHIEF GHULAM ISHAQ, AMBASSADOR DISCUSSED
INCENTIVES FOR WHEAT PRODUCTION AND PAKISTAN'S PLANS FOR
FAMILY PLANNING. ISHAQ USED CALL TO URGE FAVORABLE US
RESPONSE TO GOP REQUEST FOR DEBT RESCHEDULING.

2. WHEAT PRODUCTION- AMB NOTED USG CONCERN, EXPRESSED
EARLIER TO GOP IN AMB'S LETTER TO FINANCE SEC. GEN. KAZIN

OVER POTENTIAL DISINCENTIVE EFFECT ON WHEAT PRODUCTION

OF RESTRICTIONS ON INTER-PROVINCIAL MOVEMENT OF WHEAT AND

RELATIVELY LOW GOVT'S PROCUREMENT PRICES. ISHAQ DEFENDED

ACTIONS OF GOP ON GROUNDS THAT GOP SOUGHT TO REDUCE
DEPENDENCE ON IMPORTED WHEAT AND COULD ONLY DO SO WITH
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EFFECTIVE PROCUREMENT PROGRAM. ISHAQ ASSERTED THAT
SHORTAGES IN GOVERNMENT STOCKS THIS SPRING RESULTED
IN PART FROM EARLIER PROCUREMENT SHORTFALL, WHICH GOVT
WAS ATTEMPTING TO CORRECT IN CURRENT YEAR. ISHAQ ARGUED
THAT DISINCENTIVE EFFECT OF RESTRICTIONS WAS NEGLIGIBLE
AND ALSO TOOK THE VIEW THAT WHEAT PRICES PER SE SHOULD
NOT BE VIEWED IN ISOLATION WHEN CONSIDERING GOAL OF

AGRICULTURAL SELF-SUFFICIENCY. ISHAQ NOTED THAT WHEAT WAS ONE CROP ON DUDLE AKCROPPEH AREAD AND FARMERS NEEDS FOR HIGHER INCOME WERE BEING MET BY INCREASED GOVT PROCUREMENT PRICES FOR SUMMER CROPS OF RICE AND COTTON. IMPLICATION WAS THAT FARMERS WILL CONTINUE TO MAXIMIZE WHEAT PRODUCTION AS WINTER CROP IN ABSENCE OF ECONOMIC ALTERNATIVE FOR USE OF LAND IN THAT SEASON. HOWEVER, ISHAQ SAID THAT MEASURES WERE TEMPORARY AND THAT GOP WOULD MAKE APPROPRIATE CHANGES IN DIRECTION OF INCENTIVES FOR NEXT WHEAT CROP. AMBASSADOR EMPHASIZED LEGISLATIVE REQUIREMENT THAT PL 480 WHEAT NOT BE A DISINCENTIVE TO PAKISTANI PRODUCTION, ISHAQ AGREED THAT IT SHOULD NOT BE, BUT REITERATED HIS ASSERTION THAT GOP HAS EVERY MOTIVE TO BECOME SELF-SUFFICIENT AND WOULD CONTINUE TO MOVE IN THAT DIRECTION.

3. FAMILY PLANNING-AMB NOTED THAT WE WERE PLEASED TO SEE THAT THE JUST RELEASED SUMMARY OF THE FIVE YEAR PLAN HAD PROVISION FOR A FAMILY PLANNING PROGRAM, AND URGED THAT

VIGOROUS EFFORTS BE UNDERTAKEN TO IMPLEMENT IT.

4. DEBT RESCHEDULING-GHULAM ISHAQ QUERIED AMBASSADOR ABOUT US POSITION AT THE JUNE 1-2 CONSORTIUM MEETING ON DEBT RESCHEDULING. NOTING THAT WE DID NOT HAVE FINAL INSTRUCTIONS ON THE U.S. POSITION, AMBASSADOR SAID THAT CONFIDENTIAL

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HE ANTICIPATED US WOULD WANT MORE TIME TO CONSIDER GOP'S OVERALL RESOURCE REQUIREMENTS AND BOP POSITION BEFORE MAKING A JUDGMENT ON THE NEED OF RESCHEDULING. ISHAQ WAS OBVIOUSLY DISAPPOINTED WITH THIS RESPONSE AND SAID THAT IN VIEW OF EVENTS IN AFGHANISTAN POLITICAL STABILITY IN PAKISTAN SHOULD BE OF INCREASED IMPORTANCE TO ITS FRIENDS. HE ARGUED THAT THE ECONOMY IS VERY SHAKY AND IF PAKISTAN IS NOT ABLE TO MEET ITS IMPORT

AND DEVELOPMENT REQUIREMENTS THROUGH ADDITIONAL AID OR DEBT RESCHEDULING, THE DOMESTIC REPERCUSSIONS WILL BE SEVERE. ISHAQ CONCLUDED BY SAYING IF PAKISTAN'S TRADITIONAL DONOR FRIENDS FAIL TO RESPOND TO ITS CRITICAL NEEDS AT THIS DIFFICULT TIME, PAKISTANIS MAY CONCLUDE THAT COUNTRY HAS BEEN WRITTEN OFF AS OUTSIDE THE WEST'S AREA OF INTEREST.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: WHEAT, FAMILY PLANNING, MEETINGS, DEBT REPAYMENTS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 22 may 1978
Decaption Date: 20 Mar 2014
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978ISLAMA05070
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780215-0473
Format: TEL
From: ISLAMABAD
Handling Restrictions:
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780534/aaaabclm.tel
Line Count: 111
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: fcc08a99-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: ONLY
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: ONLY
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 29 jun 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2618861
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: MEETING WITH GHULAN ISHAQ; WHEAT PRODUCTION, FAMILY PLANNING AND DEBT RESCHEDULING
TAGS: EAGR, EFIN, SPOP, PK, (ISHAQ, GHULAN)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odhc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/fcc08a99-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014